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The Naval Medical Research Center Holds Change of Command Ceremony and Retirement

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From Doris Ryan, Naval Medical Research Center Public Affairs Officer



Rear Admiral Paul D. Pearigen, Commander, Navy Medicine West, Captain Adam W. Armstrong, Commanding Officer, Naval Medical Research Center, and Captain Jacqueline D. Rychnovsky celebrate the Naval Medical Research Center change of command and retirement of Captain Rychnovsky. Captain Rychnovsky relinquished command to Captain Adam W. Armstrong.

SILVER SPRING, Md. – Capt. Adam W. Armstrong relieved Capt. Jacqueline D. Rychnovsky during a Change of Command and Retirement Ceremony held at the Naval Medical Research Center (NMRC), April 6.

During the ceremony Rychnovsky retired after 27 years of honorable naval service. She assumed command of NMRC in 2015.

“My decision to join the Navy Nurse Corps was one of the best decisions of my life,” said Rychnovsky, a native of Liberty, Missouri, who joined the Navy in 1990. “It provided me the opportunity to see the world and earn two graduate degrees. The Navy provided me the opportunity to follow my dream of becoming both a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner and a nurse researcher, with the bonus of spending a tour on Capitol Hill and then the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and two overseas tours.”

After completing Officer Indoctrination School her first assignment was at Naval Hospital Charleston, South Carolina. In 1993 she moved on to the Naval Medical Clinic, Key West, Florida, as the Pediatric Charge Nurse. In 1997 she graduated from the University of Florida with

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a Masters of Science in Nursing degree. As a certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner her next tour took her to the Pediatric Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida.

She later served as Head of Nursing Research at the Naval Medical Center, San Diego; along with a six month tour as Head, Inpatient Nursing, at the Expeditionary Medical Facility, Camp Arifjan.

Later she completed a Health Policy Fellowship in the office of Senator Daniel K. Inouye, with a follow-on tour as the Assistant Director, Nurse Corps Policy and Practice, where she worked for the Navy Nurse Corps Director and the Navy Surgeon General, Chief Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, primarily focusing on forming nursing policy and practice.

In 2013 she completed her Executive Officer tour at U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka and became the first Nurse Corps officer to assume command of a Navy Medicine research facility at the Naval Health Research Center (NHRC), San Diego.

“This opened my eyes to an entirely new and complex world, very different than clinical research. I knew the R&D command existed but never in my wildest dreams did I appreciate the depth and breadth of the scientific portfolio until I experienced it firsthand,” said Rychnovsky.

NHRC is one of eight laboratories making up the Navy Medicine Research and Development enterprise. NHRC research efforts span the spectrum from physical readiness to joint medical planning, and wounded warrior recovery to behavioral health needs, all focusing on the health, readiness, and well-being of Sailors and Marines and their families.

In 2015 she assumed command of the Naval Medical Research Center, in Silver Spring, Maryland, headquarters of the worldwide Navy Medicine Research and Development enterprise.

The enterprise includes eight commands - NMRC, NHRC, Naval Submarine Medical Research Laboratory, Naval Medical Research Unit – San Antonio, Naval Medical Research Unit – Dayton, U.S. Naval Medical Research Center – Asia, U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3 Cairo, and U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 6 Peru.

Rear Admiral Paul D. Pearigen, commander, Navy Medicine West, served as the guest speaker and noted NMRC’s successes in supporting warfighters.

“The impact of the Naval Medical Research Center to our warfighters dates back to 1942 when it was originally named the Naval Medical Research Institute. Since then, NMRC has supported the warfighter through the study of infectious disease, biological warfare detection and defense, combat casualty care, behavioral science, human performance and other countless research initiatives geared toward protecting the force from threat and enhancing readiness,” he said.

He went on to acknowledge Rychnovsky’s military career and pointed out her experience, assignments and contributions to Navy Medicine.

“Through [her] assignments, you can see initiative, commitment and professionalism that advanced the mission and developed others,” Pearigen said. “Capt. Rychnovsky brought those traits not only while in command of the Navy Medicine Research and Development enterprise but throughout her career as a health care professional.”

Armstrong’s most recent assignment was Commanding Officer of the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 6 (NAMRU-6) in Peru. Hosted by the Peruvian Navy and co-located at their flagship hospital in Lima, and also located at the Naval Hospital in Iquitos and in Puerto

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Maldonado; NAMRU-6 conducts research on and surveillance of a wide range of infectious diseases of military or public health significance in the region, including malaria and dengue fever, yellow fever, viral encephalitides, leishmaniasis, Chagas' disease, and enteric diseases such as shigellosis and typhoid fever.

“I am very humbled to be here today. As I was looking at the wall with the photos of all the former COs, [many] members of the audience here today, and the staff throughout the command, I see many who have acted as my mentors, teachers, friends and advisors over the years and I am happy you are here to assist me on this journey. One thing that has remained constant throughout the years is all the hard work and contributions all of you have made that have directly led to the improvement of the health of the warfighter and for that you all should be proud,” said Armstrong.

The Naval Medical Research Center and the subordinate laboratories are engaged in a broad spectrum of activity from basic science in the laboratory to field studies at sites in remote areas of the world to operational environments. The capabilities and the geographical location of the laboratories reflect the broad biomedical research and development mission.

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